

Confessions by JoMo3

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Summary:

Mike tells his mom (some of) the truth about Eleven. An alternate conversation from "Dinner with the Wheelers"

Confessions

It was almost four thirty in the evening, which meant, at the moment, Karen Wheeler had a job to do-fix dinner.

She'd put her youngest, Holly, in front of the television while she made her way to the kitchen. After pouring herself a glass of wine, she got to work. Mike should be home soon, probably with his group of friends. It being a Friday, the boys (and this new girl; Max, was it?) might be staying for dinner. Ted would be home soon as well. Her daughter, Nancy, had called just after Karen had deposited Holly in front of the TV, saying she and Jonathan were going to a restaurant.

Hm. Nancy and Jonathan Byers. Who'd have thought that?

She heard the front door being unlocked, and a moment later heard it open and shut. "Michael, is that you?" she called.

"It's just me, mom!" he called back. A second later he was in the kitchen, taking off his backpack. Something looked off.

"Michael, what's wrong?" she asked, putting down her wine glass.

"Is dad home?" he asked.

"No, your father's still at work. Why? What's going on? Do I need to call him or..."

"No!" he said, putting up a hand. "No, I need to...to talk to you."

"O- kay ," she said, becoming concerned. "What is it, Michael?"

Mike sat down at the table. "I need to know that I can trust you."

Karen raised an eyebrow. "What do you mean?"

"Can I trust you?"

"Of course you can. What's going on?"

Mike took a deep breath. Whatever he was going to say, Karen figured, was going to be important. He looked like he'd come running from wherever he was, and appeared as if he were debating what he was about to say.

Finally, he said, "I have a girlfriend."

Karen smiled. "That's great, honey. Is it that Ellen girl you were telling me about?"

"Yeah, but...well, *no* , not really, it's..." He sighed. "Do you remember last month, I went and slept over at Will's?"

"Yeah," she said, not knowing where this was going.

"I didn't...I didn't really stay at Will's."

She raised an eyebrow. "Then where *were* you?"

"I was staying with her...El."

"El? Who's El?"

"My girlfriend."

Karen did a double take before saying, "What do you mean you were *staying* with her? Are the two of you..."

"What? *No* ," Mike said, turning red. "She...she lives with Chief Hopper. She's kind of like...his daughter."

"Whoa," Karen said, surprised. "Chief Hopper has a daughter? How come I've never..."

"There's more," Mike said.

"More?"

Nodding, Mike continued, "Remember when the government people were here, looking for that girl?"

"Yeah..." Karen said, realizing what he was about to say.

“That was El.”

Mike watched his mom pace back and forth, taking all of this in. During her pacing she'd poured herself another glass of wine as he sat there, trying to be patient. This *was* a lot to take in.

But he knew (as he'd told Chief Hopper), that his mother could be trusted. A year ago, after the government men had been through their house and questioned them, his mom had spent the next three nights at dinner talking about how she didn't trust those men, no matter what they'd said. His father, on the other hand, went on and on about how they were protecting them, and they had to listen, because, *they're our government. They know what's best* .

She finally stopped, and turned to him. “So all this time you've been *lying* ?”

Hopper had been specific: tell her about El, how she was the girl from the lab, but don't say anything about her powers-at least not yet. Don't talk about Demogorgons, Demodogs, Mind Slayers (Mind *Flayer* , Mike had corrected), tunnels, or any of the shit that had gone on at the lab.

“Not all the time,” Mike said in protest. “Just...twice, really.” He thought for a second. “Okay, three times.”

Karen rolled her eyes. “Does Nancy know about this?”

“No,” Mike said, wanting to keep his sister out of it. “Just me.”

“So let me get this straight...you kept a girl hidden in our basement for a week...and you've been sneaking off to see this girl for the past two months? This is the *same* girl that had people going through all of our stuff to try and find her? The one they said was dangerous?”

“She's not,” Mike pleaded. “They just...she was a lab rat for them, and she ran away.”

Karen put her hands up. “Michael, I can't...why are you telling me this now?”

“Because I want you to meet her,” he said.

She shook her head. “Michael...”

“Mom, please. I know it’s a lot, but...she’s been looking forward to it; she wants to meet *you* .”

“Do you know how much *danger* you put yourself into? This girl could’ve...”

“Mom, she’s *not dangerous* ,” he said. “She’s my friend.”

His mom shook her head. “I have to tell your father...”

Mike paled. “But you said I could trust you!”

“Michael! The fact of the matter is you’ve been lying to me and going off God knows where to see this girl. Everytime you’ve left this house you’ve been putting yourself in danger and...”

“I told you, she’s *not dangerous* ,” Mike repeated. “And besides, I...I love her.” He said this last part in a whisper.

Karen sighed. She could see the embarrassment on her son’s face after admitting this to her. But she also realized how much this girl must mean if he was saying this aloud. “You realize you’re asking for a very big favor after just admitting you’ve been lying to me for almost a whole year, don’t you?”

Mike nodded. “Yes, ma’am.”

Karen shrugged. “What would happen if I said no? If I said I don’t want you seeing this girl anymore?”

Deep down, Mike knew what would happen: he’d keep seeing her anyway. Regardless of what his mom or dad said, he would continue to see El. “I’d...I would still find a way,” he told her. “Like I said, she’s my friend.”

Karen closed her eyes and let out a long sigh. *Is this real ?* she thought to herself. Her son was friends with (dating?) some girl that...

She thought back to how she immediately distrusted the men who went through her house. She thought of the past year, when Mike seemed to go from a constantly moody teen to all of a sudden his usual self. Did that girl have anything to do with it?

And obviously he cared for her. So much so that he would keep her a secret (and lie to his mother). And did he really say he loved this girl? As much as this whole confession was overwhelming her, part of her thought she should give Mike-and this girl-a chance.

As she finished exhaling, they heard the front door being unlocked, and Ted Wheeler came into the house. Mike and his mom exchanged a brief look of panic.

"Neighbors left their trash cans out again," Ted said as he closed the door. "All over the damn street." Putting his briefcase down onto the counter, he looked at his wife and son. "Everything okay?"

"Everything's fine," Karen said, putting a smile on her face. "Dinner'll be ready in about twenty minutes, okay?"

"Okay," he said, walking into the family room.

Mike watched him go, then turned and looked back at his mom. "Well?"

Not saying a word, Karen glanced at her son as she went back to cutting up carrots, a chore she'd stopped nearly an hour ago when they'd first started talking. "Yes," she said quietly.

"Yes?" he asked, grinning.

She cleared her throat, and nodded her head.

Mike ran up behind her and hugged her waist. "Thank you thank you *thank you* ," he said quietly.

"But when this is over," she said, sliding the carrots into a bowl, "You and I are going to talk more about this."

"Okay!" he said, not caring. He ran off to go call El.

Karen smiled, watching him go. They obviously had to talk more about this, but it was good to see her son happy again.